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ABSTRACT

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Similarity-Dissimilarity in Counselor-Counselee Ethnic Match: An Investigation of the Attitudes of Black Counselees Toward White Counselors

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Abstract

Attitudes of black counselees toward white counselors were investigated using Rosen's Consequence Model Questionnaire (an adaptation of Edward's decision making paridigm of subjective probability-utility) and Gurin's modification of Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control Scale. Pre measures revealed an overall favorable attitude toward white counselors before the counseling experience. Post attitude measures revealed a significant ($P<.01$) negative attitude of black counselees assigned to white counselors and a more significant ($P<.001$) negative attitude toward white counselors by black counselees who had black counselors. Experience sensitized counselees to the limitations of white counselors, suggesting they became pro-black rather than anti-white.

Similarity-Dissimilarity in Counselor-Counselee Ethnic Match:

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ATTITUDES OF BLACK COUNSELEES TOWARD WHITE COUNSELORS[1]

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Where interpersonal relationships are involved, social scientists have been interested in isolating those factors that may influence outcomes in these relationships, e.g., type of counseling and counselor-client personality similarity. The developing literature on the experimenter effect of race under test conditions point in the direction of lower test performance of black subjects under white examiners than under black examiners(Katz, Henchy, and Allen, 1968; Katz, Robinson, Epps, and Waly, 1964; Katz and Greenbaum, 1963; Katz, Epps, and Axelson, 1964; and Katz, Roberts, and Robinson, 1965). An effective counseling relationship has its bases in conditions of mutual trust between counselor and counselee, counselor accurate empathy, and unconditional positive regard. Relatively little attention has been devoted to systematic investigations of the effect race has on "core conditions" in the counseling relationship.

With the advent of "black power;" black is beautiful;" and the intensification of efforts by blacks toward self determination, a number of helping professionals have discussed the implication of whether the oppressor can develop meaningful rapport considered fundamental to a sound counseling relationship with the oppressed (Vontress, 1971). While these discussions have been meaningful, "counseling researchers rarely

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explore or even reflect on the interaction between counselor and client of different racial groups [Banks, 1971, p. 1]."

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitude of black manpower trainees toward being counseled by a counselor of a different race (white) before and after receiving counseling by both black and white counselors. Three null hypothesis tested were: H_1 there will be no difference in pre measures of trainees attitude about being assigned to a counselor of a different race at entry into training by age, sex, and education; H_2 there will be no difference in post measures of attitude about being assigned to a counselor of a different race 6 to 8 months after program entrance by age, sex, and education; and H_3 there will be no difference between pre and post measures of trainees attitudes, about assignment to a counselor of a different race.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Subjects in this investigation were 191 black trainees (75 males and 116 females) enrolled in three manpower programs in Detroit, Michigan: Work Incentive Program (WIN), Concentrated Employment Program (CEP, and the Skill Center. Assigned to the trainees were 19 counselors (6 black and 13 white).

Procedure

Pre-interviews were conducted between October and March, 1971 and post interviews were conducted between May, 1971 and October, 1971 by 5 black interviewers (3 females and 2 males).

Trainees were administered a basic questionaire requesting demographic

data, the Internal-External Locus of Control Scale and the Consequence Model Questionaire during pre-testing, prior to counselor assignment. Enrollees had no knowledge whether their counselor would be black or white. The Consequence Model Questionaire was readministered on post testing.

Instruments

Two instruments used were the Consequence Model Questionaire (CMQ) and the Internal External Locus of Control Scale (I-E Scale).

The CMQ developed by Rosen and Komorita (1969), is a two-factor model based upon a decision theory approach to attitude assessment following Edward's (1961) subjective probability and subjective utility model. The value of a choice may be obtained by multiplying those numbers representing the probability factor and the value factor, and obtaining the summation of the products across all consequences of the decision. The two-factor approach to attitude assessment assures that each attitude has an instrumental relationship to the ends that it serves, measurement is made of the "desirability/undesirability of associated consequences as perceived by the respondent, and the likelihood that the consequences will actually result from the action, i.e., the perceived degree of association between the proposition and the consequence [Rosen and Komorita, 1969, p. 511]." The subject is asked to give his perception of what they view to be the positive and negative consequences related to the issue.

In the initial interview, subjects were asked: "What are the good and bad things that you think might happen if you were assigned to work with a counselor who is of a different race and background than you?" In the post interview, subjects were asked: "If you were to continue in

this program, what do you think would be the good and bad things that might happen if you were assigned to work with a counselor who is of a different race and background than you?" In pre and post interviews, subjects rated the probability of each positive and negative consequence generated on a scale ranging from "very likely" (score 5) to "very unlikely" (score 1). Utility of positive and negative consequences were rated on a 3-point scale that ranged from "very desirable" or very undesirable (score 3) to unimportant (score 0). From the CIQ, three measures were obtained: (a) SEU+ = the sum of the products of subjective probability and utility for positive consequences; (b) SEU- = the sum of the products of subjective probability and utility for negative consequences; and (c) Total SEU = the net result obtained by subtracting SEU- from SEU+. SEU+ scores presumably represent favorable attitudes toward the issue while SEU- scores are indicative of negative attitudes.

The I-E Scale as modified by Gurin and Gurin (1969) is based on the theoretical formulations of Rotter (1969) that success and failure is based more upon individual efforts rather than the result of external determinants. Gurin's modification of the I-E Scale makes a distinction between internal and external control operating generally in society versus at the more personal level. When placed in a more personal context, personal control ideology related to achievement and feeling of personal sufficiency, (Gurin, 1968). The modified scale is a composite of selected items from Rotter's scale and the Personal Efficiency Schedule. Items were factor analyzed with loading centering around four factors: (a) control ideology; (b) personal control; (c) system modifiability; and

(d) race ideology which is subdivided into: (1) individual collective action; (2) discrimination modifiability; (3) individual-system blame; and (4) racial militancy.

Final Sample

Absence from training at the time of post-interviews, discontinuation of training, address change and lack of forwarding address resulted in the final sample being reduced to 100 enrollees.

FINDINGS

Hypothesis 1 was supported in that there were no difference in trainees initial attitudes toward race of counselor based on age, sex, and education. Overall, trainees held favorable attitudes toward the possibility of being counseled by white counselors upon entrance into training.

Hypothesis 2 was accepted in that there would be no differences in post measures of trainees attitudes about being assigned to a counselor of a different race 6 to 8 months after program entrance by age, sex, and education. Although hypothesis 2 was accepted, overall the enrollees expressed negative attitudes toward white counselors. This finding is contrast to the overall favorable attitudes initially held toward white counselors before receiving counseling from black and white counselors.

Further analysis of initial and post measures of attitude toward white counselors revealed a significant change in attitude, which was in an unfavorable direction, occurred with counselees who had black counselors. Black counselees change in mean post-overall SEU score

was -14.391 compared to -3.673 for counselees whose counselors were white ($F=7.216$, $df=1/100$, $P<.01$).

Positive and negative SEU score - which comprise the overall SEU score - were analyzed separately. Pre and post means were tested for significance using correlated t-tests. As reflected in Table 1, the

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insert Table 1 about here

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differences in the means between pre- and post-overall SEU scores were found to be significant ($P<.01$) for the total sample. Significant differences ($P<.001$) were found between pre and post-negative SEU scores. Enrollees with black counselors had significant mean change on post-overall SEU ($P<.01$), and the mean change was also significant on post negative SEU scores ($P<.001$). Enrollees with white counselors showed a significant change between pre and post-negative SEU ($P<.001$), but there were no other significant changes. Analysis of variance on pre-overall SEU and post-overall SEU revealed no main effect of race on pre-testing, but a main effect of race was found on post overall SEU scores ($F=3.8812$, $df-2/76$, $P<.05$).

Regardless of the race of the counselor, enrollees see more negative than positive things about a white counselor after the experience with one. Hypothesis 3 is rejected for there were significant difference between initial and post measures of trainees' attitude about assignment to a counselor of a different race.

On the Internal-External locus of control scales, females tended

to subscribe to internal control ideology to a greater extent than did males ($F=5.048$, $df=1/175$, $P<.05$). Males tended to express stronger belief in racial militance than did females ($F=12.311$, $df=1/177$, $P<.001$). Two significant findings show that those more militant on the militancy scale ($F=3.541$, $df=2/145$, $P<.05$) and those more blaming of the system are less favorable in their attitude toward a white counselor. The attitude toward a white counselor is thus reflected by race ideology to some extent.

DISCUSSION

The initial attitude of black counselees toward white counselors was favorable inasmuch as the counselees felt that more good things than bad would result from the relationship with a white counselor. Age, sex, and education had no significant association with attitudes expressed.

A post assessment of black counselees' attitudes 6 to 8 months later, following interaction with counselors, reveals that the trainees were unfavorable in their attitudes overall about engaging in a counseling relationship with white counselors. It is of significance that an unfavorable change in attitude toward white counselors occurred with trainees counseled by black as well as white counselors. Regardless of the race of the counselor, all enrollees see more negative things about a white counselor after training, suggesting that counselees became pro black rather than anti-white.

Findings from this research is in the direction of support of related studies: Taylor (1970) found that among adult unemployed groups,

racial similarity between counselors and counselees was the factor affecting individual counseling relationship; Carkhuff and Banks (1970) reported that blacks tended to function at slightly higher levels of interpersonal skills with blacks than with whites; Ledvinka (1969) reported that black job seekers showed patterns of greater language elaboration in the presence of black job interviewers than with white interviewers; Gurin (1968) found that black job trainees expressed more attraction toward black male counselors than toward white male counselors, but the race of other staff members were less critical; and Gardner (1970) indicate that counselors of different levels of education and experience could function as effective change agents although black students perceived that black counselors would function at higher facilitative levels with black students than white counselors.

TABLE 2
CHANGE IN OVERALL SEU, POSITIVE SEU, AND NEGATIVE SEU SCORES OF TRAINEES IN TOTAL SAMPLE AND BY RACE OF COUNSELOR

	Number of Trainees	M	S.D.	t	P
		A. Total Sample			
Pre-Overall SEU	87	5.57	15.55		
Post-Overall SEU	100	- .94	12.21	3.19	< .01
Pre-Positive SEU	74	16.74	11.85		
Post-Positive SEU	96	18.56	9.01	1.06	n.s.
Pre-Negative SEU	70	10.79	10.41		
Post-Negative SEU	99	18.93	10.26	-5.09	< .001
		B. For Trainees with Black Counselors (N=6)			
Pre-Overall SEU	24	8.08	11.59		
Post-Overall SEU	26	-6.31	6.81	5.29	< .01
Pre-Positive SEU	21	17.10	11.27		
Post-Positive SEU	25	15.16	6.62	0.71	n.s.
Pre-Negative SEU	20	8.26	5.63		
Post-Negative SEU	26	20.88	8.07	-5.07	< .001
		C. For Trainees with White Counselors (N=13)			
Pre Overall SEU	63	4.62	16.80		
Post Overall SEU	74	.95	13.13	1.20	n.s.
Pre-Positive SEU	53	16.60	12.18		
Post-Positive SEU	71	19.76	9.46	1.61	n.s.
Pre-Negative SEU	50	11.80	11.70		
Post Negative SEU	73	18.23	10.90	-3.51	< .001

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